



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

A FEW NATIVE ORCHIDS.

BY MRS. PRESTON LOVELL.

WHOEVER reads that much-berated production, "The Modern English Novel," remembers the gorgeous young man who disports himself in its pages. However else his attire may vary, in one particular it is invariable: "an orchid in his button-hole" always adds to it the last touch of elegance. This gorgeous creature may seem a trifle remote from our every-day American civilization, but in this point we may emulate his magnificence. We may, if we will, deck ourselves with the flower which is usually considered beyond the reach of those who cannot build an orchid-house, or seek this latest of fashion's floral favorites in Amazonian forests or the islands of the sea. If you are fearless of bogs and quagmires; if you are ready to tramp through swampy underbrush, disputing territory with snakes and mosquitoes; and if, in addition, you are endowed with what Thoreau named "the instinctive second sight of a flower-hunter,"—then let us seek out a few of our wild orchids.

In mid-June, on the low, boggy shores of some lake, we shall find the first-comer, the dainty *Arethusa*. The flowers of rose purple, borne singly on a short stem, have a curious expectant air, as if a breath of wind would send them fluttering away on their rosy, outspread wings. The closely allied *Calopogon* differs from the *Arethusa* in its taller growth and brighter colors. But no orchid is without marked individuality, and we accordingly find the flowers of the *Calopogon* borne in an apparently inverted position on the stem. It also affords an excellent opportunity to study the strange methods of fertilization peculiar to this order. Few orchids are capable of self-fertilization, depending in most cases upon insect help; and I have often watched the bees coming and going about these flowers, intent only on honey-gathering, but unconsciously working out thereby the fertilization of the *Calopogon*.

To the sensitive student of plant life every order or family possesses characteristics and peculiarities of its own. I do not here refer to those obvious differences and resemblances upon which classification is based, but something much more intangible, which I do not know how to characterize, otherwise than as difference of *temperament*. In this sense the orchids are a conservative, stay-at-home class, possessed not at all by the spirit of adventure. Other plants may roam far or near in the track of man or beast, but they are impatient of new conditions, and stay firmly rooted in their original haunts. They are a law unto themselves, and usually a law past finding out. Why, for instance, did the quaint Ladies' Tresses (*Spiranthes cernua*) bloom year after year on the edge of the old brick-kiln, and nowhere else by bog or lakeside in the whole vicinity? Indeed, so tenaciously did it cling to this spot, that when years of disuse had dried the kiln I have found the short stems, with their spiral rows of tiny white flowers, among the meadow-grasses, which had usurped the place of the rushes and sedges. And why, of all the lakes scattered throughout the neighborhood, is Clear Lake the only one where the Fringed Purple Orchis (*Platanthera bigelovii*) deigns to rear her splendid spike of rose-red flowers? And this, too, in open defiance of the dictum of the botanist,—“common in wet meadows”! Her sister, the lovely Yellow Fringed Orchis (*P. ciliaris*) does not thus overstep the bounds marked out for her. “Very rare” she is indeed! Only twice have I found the slender stem, crowned by two or three delicate orange flowers, looking like nothing so much as some marvelous insect poised for flight. Once it was the sufficient reward of a long tramp under an August sun to the low-lying meadows which border the Battle Creek; and again, years after, it was the sole trophy of a trip to Hawkin's swamp for huckleberries.

This family trait is also well illustrated by the White Prairie Orchis (*P. leucophæa*). Climax is one of the prairies of small extent scattered throughout Southern Michigan; but small as it is, this characteristic prairie flower has found it out, and blooms there in profusion. Yet a short distance away, under seemingly similar conditions, except the prairie soil, you may search for it

in vain. Just where Climax prairie begins to lose itself in the Jordan marshes you may find the foot-high stem, with its raceme of greenish-white flowers, of the characteristic shape of the *Platantheras*. In this variety the long, curved, deflexed spur gives to the raceme of flowers a curious, ragged, unkempt appearance.

With the *Cypripediums*, or Lady's Slippers, few are entirely unfamiliar. "Moccasin flower" the Indians named it, far more appropriately, for its shape is very suggestive of the rounded, soleless moccasin. How vivid is the memory of our childish excursions to Markham's woods! How we searched the dry knolls and oak-crowded uplands for *Trilliums*, *Phlox*, *Lupines* ("Quaker bonnets" we called these), and Painted Cups, but still unsatisfied till we found the Yellow Lady Slipper. This was the supreme reward of our long tramp. In very different environment did we find her dainty cousin, the Pink Lady Slipper. Down in the "bottom-lands," where the sluggish Oonadaga drags through bogs and morasses, where all is shadow and rank growth, there she lifts her delicate cups of pink and white, preaching nature's unending sermon of beauty, purity, and sweetness from filth, decay, and corruption. Rarer than these, but still occasionally to be found by diligent search in swamp or marsh, is the Tall White Lady Slipper.

The time-honored maxim, "All things come round to him who waits," may, for the flower-hunter, be fitly paraphrased, "All things come round to him who *tramps*." For sooner or later, by lonely lake or grassy meadow, on mountain-top or busy side, the flower of his quest will shine before him. So I found the Tiny White Lady Slipper. I had heard of it now and then,—not often, for it is one of the shyest of its shy kind. I had sought for it, in coolness and damp, where it seemed as if it *must* be growing, and once a friend sent me one or two specimens. But at last an early morning walk brought me to the brow of a hill, from whose base a bit of lowland meadow stretched to the banks of Battle Creek. This interval was thickly dotted with the flower of my long search. They stood in patches, in the thick, lush grass, as if a band of fairies had danced the night away on the level greensward, and, fleeing away at my

approach, had left behind their dainty footgear. And dainty indeed must be the feet for such slippers! Into the largest one could scarcely insert the tip of a baby's finger. Pure white, with the gleam of the golden stamens within the tiny sac, the whole plant scarce five inches high, I know of no flower more instinct with mystery and grace.

I have mentioned in this sketch only those orchids with which I am personally familiar. A friend tells me of finding the Rattlesnake Plantain, whose leaves are curiously netted and banded with white, as if its ugly namesake had dragged over them his loathsome length. I think it very probable that this list may be extended, and I am rarely in swamp or marsh that I do not find myself peering curiously around for some strange freak of growth in petal or calyx which shall announce "a new orchid."